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ABSTRACT

A case is presented for operating schools twenty-four hours a day. This type of program provides benefits for drop-ins, adults, infants, parents, and students. With the technology present in today's society, every person can be provided the kind of education best for their needs. All should have the opportunities, at any age, provided by schools: (1) counseling: (2) exploration: (3) problem solving analysis: and (4) individualized programs for retraining or recycling for new types of jobs. The present elementary and secondary linear model is an excellent foundation on which to base the expansion of universal education. (SAS)

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MARTHA DELL SANDERS

Americans talk glibly of universal education, our dream - our reality, but we have only just begun. We have an excellent base with our elementary and secondary linear model. We understand that base and by understanding it so well, we are to the point that all things are possible for making education truly universal in the 80's.

We started by educating a select group of boys, then the girls, then the masses, then the blacks, then the other ethnic groups, between the ages of six to eighteen. We need to give some immediate attention to the night people, the drop-ins, the young adults, the diaper crowd and the mid-lifers.

We should staff and operate our schools twenty-four hours a day. They are more important than any factory or business operating in the world today. Many parents work shifts, thousands work night jobs. A recent poll showed that 13,000,000 people listened to one midwestern radio station almost every night between 12:00 A.M. and 6:00 A.M.

These night people have night children. We can no longer assume, as educators, that Mother is home with the kids while Dad works at night and will get them off to school the next morning. Who takes care of these children at night? There are no night-care centers for these parents to turn to. Teachers could work one shift, many, or parts of several.

Recently I arrived in Washington, D. C. at 10:00 P.M. I took a cab to the hotel and the driver had his two year old daughter with him. He told me that

he works all night and has no one to care for her so he just takes her in the cab all night every night. At least she had some adult supervision that way. There are thousands of night children in America with no supervision at night because of the economic necessity of their parents or guardians working.

With the kind of technology we have for the 80's, these children could be shift scheduled to fit their parents schedules and vacation time. This would allow parents and students more time together and relieve a lot of anxiety about the care of the children. Teachers would find fewer heads on desks during the traditional 8 to 3 school day. The school buildings would be better utilized and the taxpayers dollars better spent.

When I refer to the drop-ins, I am talking about the thirteen, fourteen, fifteen year old students who want and/or need to leave school to get a job. They should be allowed to do this without the stigma of being called a drop-out. Here again, if we had schools operating on three shifts, these kids could drop-in to a school shift that would allow them to complete their education. They might even stay out a year or two before they drop back in. There are no reasons, other than arbitrary ones, that say all children should have completed their secondary education by the time they are eighteen or nineteen. The kids of the 80's will live to be a hundred and twenty years old. Why do they have to go through the paces originally designed for people with a life expectancy of 45?

Some of these drop-ins might be employed and paid by the school system. As we think of creative ways to employ the youth of our country, we might even consider a paid internship for the majority of these children when they perform roles such as cross-age tutors, recreation leaders, basic skills instructors, secretarys, child-care helpers, etc. for the professional teaching staff. This

would be an excellent way to train students to get along with all types of people in an authority position in a work situation.

There are many young adults who need and would like to go back to school. Currently, our schooling process makes it difficult for them. They are not confident enough of themselves to take a test and try to go onto a higher education institution. They need to go back to a secondary situation, without the stigma of being "too old" to get the training they need to have gainful employment.

Speaking of young adults brings us to the "diaper crowd." Schools should have facilities and programs for these infants. The parents and infants could attend the same school during the same shift. Father might take infant daughter and go to school on one shift while Mother works the same shift. Mother might even go to school on another shift, etc. The possibilities are limitless. The rewards for our society, our country, would be fantastic.

The mid-lifers should also have a lot of consideration in our dream for elementary-secondary universal education in this country. Just because you have spent your entire working life in one profession does not mean you should be doomed to continue that role the rest of your life or the current alternative of forty years as an unemployed senior citizen. These people should have options available to make these changes. They should have opportunities provided by the school systems to go in for counseling, exploration, problem-solving analysis of their current skills, individualized programs for re-training or re-cycling for new types of jobs.

The process called RIF or Reduction in Force should have a built-in system that would provide monies for re-training these people in our society. Most unions have not as yet negotiated RIF monies for re-training but they should. This would be one of the finest fringe benefits any group of employees

could have. To my knowledge, insurance companies have not been very creative in this whole area either.

During the 80's, the Elementary and Secondary Education Committee could help make our people the most humane, literate and productive this world has ever known through their continued efforts of proposing legislation for universal education. I would like to see the country's slogan become, "If I have to pay taxes, let me pay them for education."